



ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S
ANNUAL REPORT

for 1950



July 1951

ALFORD URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year 1950

MR. CHAIRMAN AND GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you the Annual Report for the year ending December 31st, 1950, on the Health and Sanitary conditions of the Alford Urban District. I am pleased to be able to report once again that the general health in Alford has been good throughout the year and that we have been fortunate in escaping the outbreak of Measles which has been so very prevalent in the County and in keeping clear of Poliomyelitis which was epidemic for some months. The improvement in the Sanitary conditions of the Town has continued.

In June Mr. E. St. L. Whitford, who has been Surveyor and Sanitary Officer to the Council for some years, resigned and Mr. J. P. Smith, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A. from the Louth District, was appointed in his place.

The year 1950 started with a mild and bright winter and spring but was followed by a wet and sunless summer and autumn to the detriment of Agriculture and the food situation. The economic situation of the country, though improving, did not allow of much relaxation of the severe rationing to which we have all become so much accustomed, and at the end of the year there was evidence of an approaching fuel crisis.

Vital Statistics.

The area of district is 1,138 acres.

The estimated population of the town 2,300.

The Rateable Value is £10,554 and the value of a penny rate is £41/15/5½.

The number of inhabited houses is 819.

The births numbered 37—20 male and 17 female. This represents a birthrate of 16.1 per thousand of the population. The corresponding figure for the whole of England and Wales was 15.8. The figure of 37 includes one illegitimate birth. There were no stillbirths.

The deaths numbered 32—11 male and 21 female. This represents a deathrate per thousand of the population 13.9 compared with the figure of 11.6 for the whole country. There was 1 death in children under one year; this gives an infant mortality rate (that is the deathrate per thousand live births) of 27 as compared with 29.8 for England and Wales. Of the 32 deaths 7 were due to cancer, 9 to diseases of the heart and circulatory system, 10 to vascular lesions of the nervous system, 1 to intestinal diseases, 1 to tuberculosis, 1 to congenital malformation and 3 to other diseases. No deaths were due to accidents or other violent causes.

General Provision of Health Services.

Laboratory examinations are carried out at the Public

Laboratory Service at Lincoln. Complete water analyses when necessary by Messrs W. W. Taylor, of Nottingham.

Midwifery, hospital and nursing services are unchanged. The Alford Memorial Hospital, under the Health Act, is in the Grimsby Hospital Group; it does not admit midwifery cases but if necessary hospital treatment can generally be obtained for such cases Louth, Spilsby or Skegness.

Infectious diseases if requiring hospital treatment are sent to Scarthoe Isolation Hospital, except poliomyelitis, which are sent to Lincoln.

Scabies is rarely seen in Alford now; no cases were reported during 1950.

Veneral diseases also are seldom seen now and no cases were reported. A special clinic is in operation for such cases.

DIPHTHERIA. There were no cases of this disease during the year. Immunisation is now carried out under the direction of the County Authority and is generally given by the local medical men. During the year 20 children under 5 years and 1 between 5 and 14 years were given protection against Diphtheria and 8 were given Booster or re-inforcing doses. I should like to impress on parents once again the importance of having their children immunised.

VACCINATION. During the year 20 children were vaccinated against Smallpox and 2 re-vaccinations were given. This is a considerable improvement on the 1949 figure but still only just over 50% of the births. The speed of modern transport has much increased the risk of infection from abroad and recent outbreaks have been of a very dangerous type.

TUBERCULOSIS. There was one case of this notified in Alford during the year and one death.

PUERPERAL DISEASE. We were free from this trouble throughout the year and there was no death from any maternal cause.

PREVALENCE OF DISEASE. The general health of the town has been good and we have kept free from epidemics though there was a considerable number of cases of influenza at the end of the year and some of it was of a serious nature. The following cases of infectious diseases were notified :-

Whooping Cough	2	Pneumonia	3
Measles	1	Eurysipelas	1
Scarlet Fever	1	Tuberculosis	
		(non-pulmonary)	1

HOUSING. There are many sub-standard houses in the town; to ascertain the true picture of the housing problem it will be necessary to carry out a detailed housing survey. This is not possible at present, however, owing to inadequacy of staff. No houses were completed by the Council during the year but 16 are being built, 6 of which have been allocated to tenants of the Squatters Camp in an effort to eliminate this camp as soon as possible. Seven houses built by private enterprise were completed in 1950.

WATER. The town water supply continues to be excellent in quality and quantity. Regular samples are taken for Bacteriological investigation. The only part of the Urban District which is not

within reasonable distance of the watermains is the hamlet of Tothby and here four shallow wells supplying the seven cottages were found to be polluted. It is hoped very shortly to extend the mains in order that these cottages may have a pure supply.

SEWERAGE DISPOSAL WORKS. A large amount of cleaning up has been carried out at the disposal works. The dykes have been cleaned out and the effluent drain regraded and excavated by the Alford Drainage Board and the hedges and undergrowth have been improved. All the metal work, including the pumps, sprinkler arms, etc. have been painted. The pumps in the main pumphouse have been overhauled and painted, and repairs done to the door and window. At the screening chambers a small filter bed has been constructed to receive the screenings and allow the liquid to filter back into the screening chamber. This is a great improvement and will obviate any complaints of foul smells. An effluent sample was reported as being quite satisfactory.

REFUSE DISPOSAL. It has now been found possible to carry out the fortnightly collection of house refuse with two men instead three. This is mainly due to the elimination of 50 pail closets now converted to water closets. Eventually it is hoped to make a weekly collection of refuse. This will be a more efficient service and a considerable saving of rates for this service.

Notice was served on 61 property owners for the provision of dustbins, with a few exceptions these notices have been complied with, resulting in a further speed-up of collection. Work is proceeding on the conversion of the remaining privy vaults and bucket closets; there are still 40 vaults and 237 bucket or pan closets to be converted.

SEWERS. Two short extensions of the sewer were made during the year, one in Hanby Lane to enable the conversion of 7 pail closets and the other in the Rookery to enable a new bungalow to be connected to the main sewer. Both were about 45 yards long. Complaints were again received concerning the discharge of tar into the sewers by the Alford Gas Company. After the attention was drawn to this serious matter the Council was given an undertaking that a filter would be installed at the gas works to prevent any recurrence of this trouble.

ICE CREAM. The Council have now 7 premises in the town selling Ice Cream of which 2 are manufacturers, the rest selling prepacked Ice Cream only. These premises have all been inspected and samples taken for Bacteriological examination.

RATS AND MICE. A number of infestations were treated by the Council's part-time rodent operator. Treatment were also carried out at the refuse tip, sewage disposal works and at the Squatters Camp.

FOOD INSPECTION. During the year regular inspections have been made at various foodshops in the town and it has been found necessary to condemn a certain amount of food, particularly tinned food.

I have the honour to be, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

C. S. E. WRIGHT,

Medical Officer of Health.